

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 1631

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 2. CORRECTED)

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, AKB, GE, UR, GW
SUBJECT: WEST BERLIN AND FRG REACTION TO HONECKER'S INTERVIEW
IN SAARBRUECKER ZEITUNG

REF: (A) USBERLIN 1578, (B) BERLIN 4506

SUMMARY: WEST BERLIN REACTION UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNED HONECKER'S
ASSERTION THAT FOUR-POWER AGREEMENT APPLIES ONLY TO WEST
BERLIN. FRG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN BOELLING REITERATED LONG-
STANDING FRG POSITION IDENTICAL TO THOSE OF WESTERN ALLIES,
HOLDING THAT QA APPLIES TO ALL OF BERLIN. BOELLING EXPRESSED
GUARDED OPTIMISM HOWEVER ON OTHER ASPECTS OF FRG-GDR CON-
TACTS. END SUMMARY.

1. HARD ON THE HEELS OF THE RECENT INTERVIEW WITH ABRASIMOV,
SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO GDR (REFTEL A), GDR HEAD OF STATE AND
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SED PARTY GENERAL SECRETARY HONECKER GAVE AN INTERVIEW
TO NEWSPAPER SAARBURECKER ZEITUNG. PAPER IS NOT AVAILABLE
TO US HERE BUT WE BELIEVE THAT INTERVIEW WAS PUBLISHED
JULY 4 OR 5. REFTEL (B) PROVIDED EMBASSY BERLIN'S
ASSESSMENT OF INTERVIEW AS REPRINTED IN NEUES DEUTSCH-
LAND ON JULY 7. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS ON WEST BERLIN AND
FRG REACTION THEREUNTO.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INTERVIEW HAD BEEN PUBLISHED, GOVERNING MAYOR DIETRICH STOBBE (SPD) REJECTED HONECKER'S OPINION THAT THE Q.A. WAS VALID FOR WEST BERLIN ONLY. THAT INTERPRETATION WAS "DEVIOUS" AND DID NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE "EXISTING SITUATION IN THE RELEVANT AREA" (MENTIONED IN THE TEXT OF THE AGREEMENT) REFERRED TO ALL OF BERLIN AND NOT ONLY TO THE WESTERN SECTORS, STOBBE SAID. ALTHOUGH THE FIRST PASSAGE OF THE AGREEMENT REFERRED TO THE DIFFERENT LEGAL POSITIONS OF THE THREE WESTERN POWERS AND THE SOVIET UNION, IT WAS MORE OR LESS DESTRUCTIVE TO CALL THE LEGAL OPINION OF THE THREE WESTERN POWERS AND THE FRG "NOTHING BUT WASTE-PAPER." BUT STOBBE GREETED HONECKER'S POSITIVE REMARKS ABOUT THE PENDING TRAFFIC TALKS.

3. MAYOR AND FDP CHAIRMAN WOLFGANG LUEDER SAID HONECKER TRIED TO CHANGE THE HISTORY OF THE Q.A. BUT THAT WILL NOT PREVENT THE BERLIN LIBERALS FROM DEVELOPING THE LINKS TO THE FRG ON THE BASIS OF THE AGREEMENT. LUEDER ADDED THAT, OBVIOUSLY, ABRASIMOV AS WELL AS HONECKER TRIED TO INFLUENCE THE FRG.

4. THE SAME CRITICAL LINE WAS FOLLOWED BY THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CDU OPPOSITION. CDU CHAIRMAN PETER LORENZ EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT ALL CONFIDENTIAL

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FOUR SECTORS OF THE CITY WERE CONCERNED WHENEVER BERLIN WAS A TOPIC OF NEGOTIATIONS OR AGREEMENTS. NOTHING CHANGES "WHEN THE GDR CLAIMS EAST BERLIN IS THE CAPITAL OF THE GDR AND THUS VIOLATES THE CITY'S FOUR POWER STATUS," LORENZ ASSERTED. WESTERN MILITARY PATROLS IN EAST BERLIN SHOWED THAT THE FOUR POWER STATUS STILL EXISTED. ANY ATTEMPTS TO CONSTRUCT A FOUR POWER STATUS FOR WEST BERLIN ONLY MUST BE VIGOROUSLY REJECTED, LORENZ CONCLUDED.

5. CDU CAUCUS LEADER HEINRICH LUMMER STRESSED THAT THE STATEMENTS ON A SO-CALLED FOUR POWER STATUS OF WEST BERLIN ONLY WOULD NOT BECOME VALID EVEN IF HONECKER REPEATED THEM OBSTINATELY "LIKE A TIBETAN PRAYER-WHEEL." ALREADY THE FACT THE THE Q.A. HAD IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN BOTH PARTS OF BERLIN PROVED THAT THE FOUR POWERS HAD INTENDED THE AGREEMENT TO COVER ALL OF BERLIN, LUMMER ADDED.

6. THE BERLIN FDP BUNDESTAG DEPUTY AND DEPUTY FDP CAUCUS LEADER HANS-GUENTHER HOPPE REGARDED HONECKER'S REMARKS AS A SIGN OF GDR WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE THE

INNER GERMAN DIALOGUE. HOWEVER, THE READINESS OF THE GDR TO ALLOW PROGRESS HAS, UNFORTUNATELY, THUS FAR BEEN CONFINED TO MERELY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS, HOPPE SAID. THAT SHOWED "EAST BERLIN'S LIMITED COMPETENCE." BUT HONECKER'S REMARKS BECOME HAZARDOUS WHENEVER HE DEALS

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WITH STATUS PROBLEMS. "TO CONTINUE ASSERTING THESE ARBITRARY INTERPRETATIONS OF THE Q.A. COULD BURDEN INNER GERMAN RELATIONS," IN HOPPE'S VIEW. INSTEAD OF USING VERBAL "TRICKS," HONECKER WOULD DO BETTER TO OBSERVE STRICTLY THE AGREEMENT IN ALL ITS ASPECTS AND TO APPLY IT SULLY, HOPPE CONCLUDED.

7. BERLIN PRESS REACTION WAS NO LESS CRITICAL THAN THE STATEMENTS OF THE LEADING POLITICIANS. INDEPENDENT "TAGESSPIEGEL" AS WELL AS "ABEND" HELD THE OPINION THAT HONECKER'S INTERVIEW WAS NOTHING BUT A REACTION TO BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO BONN AND INTENDED TO PLAY UP GDR SOVEREIGNTY.

8. "TAGESSPIEGEL" REGRETTED THAT THE GDR OBVIOUSLY HAD ONLY A VERY LIMITED INTEREST IN SETTLING PENDING PROBLEMS -- E.G., CITIZENSHIP AND TRAFFIC.

9. ONLY THE WEST BERLIN COMMUNIST ORGAN "WAHRHEIT"

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PRAISED HONECKER'S STATEMENT AS THE WAY TO PROMOTE PEACE AND DETENTE IN EUROPE AND TO NORMALIZE THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE GDR. THE PAPER APPEALED TO THE GOVERNING MAYOR "TO ACCEPT THE Q.A. ON WEST BERLIN WITHOUT ANY RESERVATION AND TO USE THE VITAL POSSIBILITIES IT PROVIDES FOR THE CITY AND ITS CITIZENS."

10. "DIE WELT" (INDEP) OF JULY 8 CARRIED INTERVIEW WITH FRG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN KLAUS BOELLING WHICH HIGHLIGHTED "THE LATEST ERRORS OF INTERPRETATION" WHICH HONECKER HAD COMMITTED IN INTERVIEW. BOELLING POINTED OUT THAT FRG POSITION WHICH HOLDS THAT FOUR POWER AGREEMENT (QA) APPLIES TO ALL OF BERLIN IS FULLY IN ACCORD WITH THAT OF WESTERN ALLIES CITING THE LONDON DECLARATION OF MAY 1977 IN THIS REGARD. BOELLING NOTED THAT THIS POSITION IS BASED ON AGREEMENTS MADE AMONG US, UK, FRANCE AND USSR BEFORE AND IMMEDIATELY AFTER CLOSE OF WW II.

11. ASKED WHETHER HE FEARED A WORSENING OF INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS AS A RESULT OF HONECKER'S MISINTERPRETATIONS, BOELLING SAID NO, BECAUSE HONECKER HAD MADE A "BASICALLY POSITIVE EVALUTATION" OF "IDENTIFIABLE PROGRESS," IN THESE RELATIONS AND REPEATED THAT THE GDR WOULD CONTINUE TO RESPECT QA FULLY. THIS WAS THE FRG'S POSITION AS WELL.

12. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR A SCHMIDT-HONECKER MEETING, BOELLING REPLIED THAT THE FRG HAD NOT CHANGED ITS POSITION--NAMELY, THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL ONLY WHEN THE CLIMATE BETWEEN THE TWO GERMAN STATES HAD DEVELOPED SO POSITIVELY AS TO MAKE THE POSSIBLE RESULTS FROM THE MEETING PROMISING TO BOTH SIDES.
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BELLING NOTED THAT HONECKER ALSO SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL EFFORTS WERE NECESSARY BEFORE SUCH A MEETING COULD TAKE PLACE. IN CLOSING, BOELLING STATED THE FRG'S CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO EASING PERSONAL BURDENS ON GDR CITIZENS INCLUDING GIVING MORE OF THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL TO THE WEST AND ALSO EXPRESSED GUARDED OPTIMISM ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE BERLIN-HAMBURG AUTOBAHN AND THE TELTOW CANAL WHICH HAVE RECENTLY OPENED. GEORGE

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